

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CU-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 TRSE-00 IO-13 /083 W

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FM USLO PEKING

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7541

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 0657

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINR, CH

SUBJ: HUA KUO-FENG STILL PREMIER

REF: HONG KONG 3751

1. CHINESE OFFICIALS HAVE REACTED WITH DISPLEASURE -- AND SCORN -- TO SPECULATION AMONG FOREIGNERS THAT HUA KUO-FENG MIGHT BE DROPPING THE TITLE OF PERMIER. NOTING THE APRIL 2 AND APRIL 3 STORIES LISTING HUA WITH ONLY THE TITLE OF PARTY CHAIRMAN (REFTEL), SEVERAL JOURNALISTS ASKED THE INFORMATION DEPARTMENT TO CLARIFY HUA'S STATUS. IN ALL CASES, THE RESPONSE WAS QUICK AND TINGED WITH ANGER; HUA IS ALSO THE PREMIER AND WILL REMAIN SO.

2. AT THE AIRPORT ARRIVAL CEREMONY FOR VISITING MAURITANIAN PRESIDENT OULD DADDAH APRIL 6, JOURNALISTS POINTEDLY ASKED IF "PREMIER" HUA WOULD DO THE HONORS. INFORMATION DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS REPLIED SHARPLY THAT "CHAIRMAN AND PREMIER" HUA
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ALONG WITH VICE PREMIER LI HSIEN-NIEN WOULD GREET THE VISITOR. AND THE APRIL 7 PEOPLE'S DAILY AND OTHER MEDIA HAVE DESCRIBED HUA IN THIS FASHION.

3. COMMENT: WE HAVE NO READY EXPLANATION FOR THE DROPPING OF HUA'S TITLE OF PREMIER IN THE APRIL 2 AND 3 STORIES. RANKING OFFICIALS IN THE INFORMATION/PROPAGANDA APPARATUS HAVE ALSO

RECENTLY BEEN EMBARRASSED BY FALSE PREDICTIONS TO FOREIGNERS
CONCERNING TENG HSIAO-PING'S IMMINENT RETURN -- NOW PUT OFF TO
THE JUNE/JULY TIME FRAME BY SOME OF THE SAME OFFICIALS. WE
WONDER, THEREFORE, IF THE NEWS MEDIA MIGHT HAVE FLOATED THE
"CHAIRMAN HUA" STORIES AS PART OF COMPLEX LEADERSHIP
INFIGHTING ON THE OVERRIDING ISSUE OF TENG.
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Message Attributes

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